

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3905

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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USEC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

QMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 472

USUN NEW YORK 359

USMISSION NATO

USOECD PARIS 998

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: TELEVISION PANEL DISCUSSION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. PRIMIN JOHANNESSON CAME UNDER CONSIDERABLE
CRITICISM FROM BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT FOR GOI CONDUCT OF FISHERIES
LIMIT QUESTION DURING TELEVISION PANEL DISCUSSION AUGUST 28.
CRITICS ALLEGED THAT GOI NEGLECT OF COAST GUARD HAD RENDERED IT
UNABLE TO PREVENT VIOLATIONS OF 50-MILE LIMIT AND THAT
DEMANDS FOR NATO INTERVENTION TO REMOVE BRITISH TRAWLER PROTECTION
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FLEET HAD BEEN INSUFFICIENTLY FORCEFUL. END SUMMARY.

2. ICELANDIC STATE TELEVISION PRESENTED FIVE-MAN PANEL DISCUSSION OF FISHERIES LIMITS QUESTION AUGUST 28, CLOSE TO THE ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 1, 1972 EXTENSION OF LIMITS TO FIFTY MILES. PANELISTS, REPRESENTING FIVE POLITICAL PARTIES, WERE PRIMIN OLAFUR JOHANNESSON (PROGRESSIVE), SVAVAR GESTSSON (PEOPLES ALLIANCE) EDITOR OF PA DAILY THJODVILJINN, EYJOLFUR KONRAD JONSSON (INDEPENDENCE PARTY) EDITOR OF IP DAILY MORGUNBLADID, EIDUR GUDNASON (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY) A TV NEWSMAN, AND A CAPTAIN EYJOLFSSON (ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS), A TRAWLER SKIPPER.

3. JONSSON OF THE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND GESTSSON OF THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE WERE MOST CRITICAL OF THE PRIMIN. BOTH CHARGED THAT GOI HAD FAILED TO STRENGTHEN ICELANDIC COAST GUARD DURING PAST YEAR SUFFICIENTLY TO MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR POLICING THE 50-MILE LIMIT. THEY ALLEGED THAT UK HAS BEEN ABLE TO CATCH ITS USUAL SHARE OF FISH OFF OF ICELAND, REGARDLESS OF THE LIMIT. JONSSON AND GESTSSON DEMANDED THAT COAST GUARD STRENGTH BE DOUBLED AND THAT CUTTERS OPERATE IN GROUPS OF THREE IN HIGHLY FISHED ZONES.

4. JOHANNESSON DEFENDED HIMSELF BY CLAIMING THAT ALL NATIONS EXCEPT UK AND FRG RECOGNIZED ICELANDIC LIMIT, THEREFORE VIOLATIONS WERE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED. HE ADMITTED THAT IF ALL NATIONS DID NOT ACCEPT STRICT LEGALITY OF LIMIT, THEY AT LEAST RESPECTED AND DID NOT VIOLATE IT. HE CITED THE SOVIET UNION AS AN EXAMPLE. JOHANNESSON ALSO CLAIMED THAT BRITISH FISHING CATCH FIGURES WERE GROSSLY INFLATED AND THAT COAST GUARD EFFORTS HAD CONSIDERABLY REDUCED BRITISH CATCH.

5. TRAWLER SKIPPER EYJOLFSSON CAME TO DEFENSE OF PRIMIN, STATING THAT HEIGHT OF STERN TRAWLERS MADE BOARDING EFFORTS BY SMALL ICELANDIC CUTTERS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. WITHOUT RUNNING RISK TO LIVES, COAST GUARD WAS RESTRICTED TO HARASSING OPERATIONS SUCH AS TRAWL WIRE CUTTING.

6. JONSSON AND GESTSSON JOINTLY CRITICIZED GOI PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS, PARTICULARLY THE DECISION TO RESTRICT NEWSMEN FROM ACCOMPANYING COAST GUARD CUTTERS ON THEIR POLICING MISSIONS.
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THEY ALSO CLAIMED THAT GOI SHOULD BE DOING MORE TO PUBLICIZE ITS CASE IN THE UK AND FRG.

7. PRIMIN NOTED GOI DISSATISFACTION WITH INABILITY OF NATO TO PRESSURE UK TO WITHDRAW TRAWLER PROTECTION FLEET. JONSSON TOOK PREDICTABLE INDEPENDENCE PARTY LINE THAT NATO NOT EMPOWERED TO SOLVE DISPUTES BETWEEN MEMBER NATIONS. GESTSSON OFFERED USUAL COMMUNIST LINE THAT IF ICELAND COULD DERIVE NO BENEFIT FROM NATO MEMBERSHIP THEN IT SHOULD WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY.

8. JONSSON THEN LED DISCUSSION INTO INDEPENDENCE PARTY POLICY DEMAND THAT GOI PUSH FOR 200-MILE LIMIT IMMEDIATELY. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF MOMENTUM DEVELOPING IN PRELIMINARY LOS CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS. PRIMIN AND GESTSSON ARGUED THAT 200-MILE LIMIT WAS STILL ONLY IN DISCUSSION PHASE AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO SECURE RECOGNITION OF 50 MILE FIRST. IRVING

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